



Tears for tragic Eleanor

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■ Hazard – Len Gridley by fence where gas canisters were piled by Dale Farm travellers. They were shifted hours after our photo was taken *Picture: AL UNDERWOOD a2CRN 10*

A GAS BOTTLE BOMBSHELL...

Dale Farm travellers pile gas canisters by neighbour's fence

A DEADLY gas canister barricade has been torn down at the Crays Hill traveller site – but only after a neighbour threatened to blow it up.

Basildon Council officials, backed by police and firefighters, removed nearly 40 gas bottles piled on the other side of Len Gridley's back garden fence.

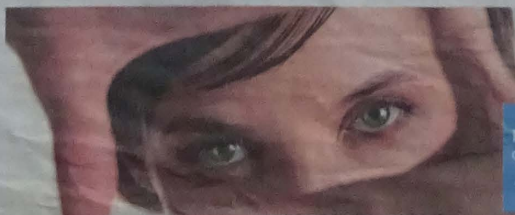
Mr Gridley, 49, of Oak Road, Crays Hill, woke yesterday morning to find canisters stacked

By JON AUSTIN jon.austin@nqe.com

against his fence, along with scaffold poles and towers. Mr Gridley called the police, fearing the worst following reports guns and explosives might be used to defend the site against eviction.

He told police if they were not removed within 24 hours he would set light to them himself. He explained:

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TODAY



Soccer yob gets match ban P13



Upset by abuse of our troops P14



Children's champ Pat PAGE 17

TOMORROW

The Saturdays are coming Weekend



Girl 'told friend man was a pervert'

A SCHOOLGIRL has denied making up claims she had been sexually assaulted.

A jury at Basildon Crown Court heard the girl testify via a video link she had been repeatedly abused by Keith Cox, 61.

During cross-examination, the girl accepted she hadn't told her parents about the abuse until August last year. However, she said she had confided in a cousin.

She insisted she hadn't made up the allegations and had been "hiding" it from her family because she was scared and didn't want Cox to get into trouble.

A family friend also gave evidence. She said she was with the alleged victim when she was spoken to by police for the first time.

She said the girl denied Cox had abused her, but after the officers left, she described the defendant as "a pervert" and admitted he had touched her breasts and private parts.

Cox, of Woburn Place, Billericay, denies seven charges of indecent assault, three of assault by penetration of a child under 13 and two counts of attempted rape and rape.

He also denies another serious sexual offence, causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity and indecency with a child.

The offences are alleged to involve four schoolgirls and took place between 1975 and 2007 while he lived at addresses in Waltham Cross, Pitsea, Noak Bridge and Billericay.

The trial continues.

Bin bag slip-ups cost woman £515

By ADAM GAUDRY
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PUTTING out her rubbish early has cost a woman a total of £515.

Katy Lloyd, 26, of Elizabeth Way, Laindon, twice left out bin bags for collection two days before she was supposed to.

Last August, Basildon Council sent Lloyd a warning letter, but she did it again in December.

- ❑ She put rubbish out two days early
- ❑ Councillor says it's not a minor offence

This time, officials gave her a £75 fixed penalty fine, which she failed to pay.

He case was taken to court and she was fined £350, with £150 costs and a £15 victim surcharge by Basildon magistrates.

Lloyd, whose case was

heard in her absence, admitted failing to pay the fine.

Terri Sargent, councillor responsible for the environment, said: "Leaving a refuse sack out early may seem like a minor offence, but they are an unnecessary eyesore and often end up with their contents spilled across the streets."

"This is not only looks unsightly. It encourages vermin and costs local

taxpayers to clean it up.

"We always offer a warning to anyone who has left their sacks out well ahead of the collection date."

"However, those who choose to ignore the warning and continue to blight the environment can expect a fine."

She urged residents to help keep the district clean and tidy by only putting rubbish out the evening before collection.

Traveller site gas threat

FROM PAGE 1

"They went too far this time. The police and council had no choice, because I made it clear I was serious. It would have taken out the site."

"It took my threat to get action. When gas bottles went up before, it took two years before they came down, but I'm not taking it any more."

Council staff had removed the bottles by 3pm yesterday, following a visit by police and firefighters. Police spokesman Roger Grimwade said canisters had been wired together.

He added: "There were 38 canisters. A few had residual amounts of gas. The council was alerted and removed them."

Phil Easteal, the council's environmental health manager, said: "Working with police and fire officers, we have removed a number of empty gas containers for appropriate disposal."

Canisters still pose an explosion threat when empty. They were stacked along the fence in a way which recalled the gas bottle barricade travellers built elsewhere at Dale Farm in 2005.

Traveller spokesman Grafton Puxon, who helped build the previous barricade, said the canisters were awaiting collection.

He said: "Mr Gridley does not have right of way on the site, so storing them there should not have affected him."

The original barricade was built in July 2005 and remained for two years, despite public outcry. Fire chiefs ordered its removal after the June 2007 London and Glasgow terrorist attacks, which used cars packed with gas canisters.

Billericay MP John Baron said: "Using a local resident's fence as part of what looked like preparations for a barricade was an escalation of the situation and a retrograde step, which I condemn."

ADAM LOSES HIS LOCKS TO HELP COMIC RELIEF

SCHOOLBOY Adam Hill is definitely feeling the cold after having his shaggy locks chopped off for charity.

The 14-year-old pupil of Woodlands School, Basildon, decided to lose his locks to raise money for Comic Relief.

The Cut-Inn Hair and Beauty salon in Lee Chapel South, did the cut for free and so far, Adam has raised £228 for the BBC fundraising telethon.

He said: "I just did it for a bit of fun and a bit of a laugh, and seeing as it's coming up to Comic Relief time, I thought why not?"

"I'm kind of missing the hair and it still feels a bit breezy, but it's worth it, as it's a good cause."



■ For the chop - Adam gets shorn by his hairdresser mum Jacqui and sister, Georgina. Inset: Adam's new look. Picture: DAVE HENDERSON PYCN7 & PYCN11

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